



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Falls Church City Animal Control Issues Coyote Warning to Residents

FALLS CHURCH, VA. - Due to recent events involving a suspected coyote attack on a pet cat in the Broadmont area and one on Hillwood Avenue and numerous reports of sightings from residents throughout the City, Falls Church Animal Control and the Falls Church Police Department are issuing a coyote warning to City residents.

Coyotes have been documented in every county in Virginia and are a common sight in Fairfax County, the Town of Vienna, and Fairfax City. Over the past five years, one rabid coyote has been documented in Virginia, according to Virginia Health Department statistics.

Coyotes are nocturnal predators, inhabiting an area until their food source is exhausted—occasionally active during daylight hours, specifically around dawn and dusk.

Approaching a coyote may provoke an encounter if the animal feels cornered or restricted in movement. This is particularly true of coyotes that have become accustomed to the presence of humans and their activities as a consequence of being fed, or because of access to a readily available food source such as pet food, refuse, small pets, garden plants, and wildlife. Residents should keep all pet food indoors, secure refuse cans and lids, and close or eliminate pet doors. Pet cats, rabbits, and small dogs should never be left unattended or unrestrained when outdoors.

Residents should never try to approach, feed, trap or corner these animals. Coyotes are extremely difficult to capture and almost impossible to trap in any one area, especially because the location of the den is unknown.

Coyotes are often mistaken for dogs, typically weighing 25-40 pounds. They exhibit relatively long, thick fur; a long, bushy, black-tipped tail usually pointed downward; pointed and erect ears; and a long, slender snout. Their fur varies in color from blond, light reddish-brown or tan, grayish black, or black with a small white spot in the center of the chest.

Anyone who sees a coyote or suspects a coyote attack should contact the Falls Church Animal Control Officer at 703-248-5172 or the Falls Church Police Department at 703-241-5052 immediately. Falls Church Animal Control is in contact with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the U.S. Department of Agriculture regarding this issue and will continue to monitor any further complaints and sightings.

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